



THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES
2010

NORTH FALLS OFFSHORE WIND FARM

Appendix E7 to the Natural England Deadline 7 Submission
Natural England's Marine Mammal Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 6 Documents

For:

The construction and operation of North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, located approximately 40 km from the East Anglia Coast in the Southern North Sea.

Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010119

15 July 2025

Appendix E7 - Natural England's Marine Mammal Advice on the Applicant's Deadline 6 Documents

In formulating these comments, the following documents have been considered:

- [REP6-030] 7.7 Draft Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Rev 3) (Tracked)
- [REP6-032] 7.10 Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)

1. Detailed comments

Table 1: Natural England's Advice On: [REP6-030] 7.7 Draft Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Rev 3) (Tracked)

Document reviewed: [REP6-030] 7.7 Draft Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (Rev 3) (Tracked)			
NE Ref	Section	Key Concern and/or Update	Natural England's Advice to Resolve Issue
1	Plate 1.2	We are content with the amendments of the Plate 1.2 as per our advice.	N/A
2	Section 1.4 & Table 1.5	Natural England notes that the Applicant has not accepted our advice on the use of Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) for Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance. The Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (MMMP) [REP6-030] still refers to this as 'unlikely to be required'. We also note the Applicant's response in E27 of Table 1.5 Examination Comments and Relevant Representations: <i>"For UXO clearance the Applicant has committed to the use of PAM in instances when there are not favourable conditions with good visibility (sea state 3 or less)."</i>	Our advice remains that PAM is a required monitoring tool for UXO clearance especially given that the proposed development is within a designated SAC for harbour porpoise. Therefore, we do not consider this issue to be resolved.
3	Table 1.5	We also note the Applicant's response in E23 of the Table 1.5 Examination Comments and Relevant Representations [REP6-030]: <i>"Alternative monitoring strategies will be considered in the final MMMP post-consent. MMO and PAM techniques are developing and changing, and technologies are already available including night vision binoculars and cameras that are already regularly used for research and mitigation purposes, and alternative visual strategies could be considered. All options will be considered, and this will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Natural England, post-consent."</i>	We advise that it is important that this statement is included in the main body text of the Draft MMMP, not just in the Appendix as a response to our comment, to ensure that the Monitoring Area (MA) of 700m will be adequately monitored to guarantee the detection of the key species.

Table 2: Natural England's Advice On: [REP6-032] 7.10 Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)

Document reviewed: [REP6-032] 7.10 Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan (Rev 1) (Tracked)			
NE Ref	Section	Key Concern and/or Update	Natural England's Advice to Resolve Issue
1	Table 5.3	Natural England welcomes the Applicant's decision that at least one of the four monitored piles will be at a location anticipated to generate the greatest underwater noise levels. Natural England notes that the Applicant proposed to conduct additional monitoring besides the standard requirement for noise measurements for the first four piled foundations (Table 5.3).	We provisionally agree with the proposed monitoring which we will discuss with the Applicant in more detail during the post-consent engagement.
2	Para 49	We note in Para 49 that it states " <i>All potential cumulative residual effects were determined to be negligible to minor adverse (not significant)</i> ". This is not in line with the updated assessment provided within [REP5-069] 9.81 Marine Mammal Assessment Classification whereby 'Table 2.4 Overall Significance of Effect for the iPCoD and DRC Approach for the Cumulative Effects Assessment (prior to additional mitigation)' indicated major and moderate adverse effects for harbour porpoise and seals respectively (as per DRC assessment methodology).	We advise that this should not be overlooked, and all documents should be consistently reporting the outcomes of the updated assessment.